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ABSTRACT

This report presents a panel discussion at which participants discussed the question of political correctness and what the debate shows about what is happening to higher education in the United States and what it suggests about the relationship of higher education to current events in this country, to the world, and to the students who attend. Among the viewpoints are the following: (1) college students believe that politics are a never-ending conflict, corrupt, mean-spirited, and ultimately ineffectual, i.e. it never solves any problems people really care about; (2) college students see institutions of higher education as irrelevant to political life; (3) the responsibility of academic leadership is to keep the university open to the fullest and freest expression of differing views even when the expression of those views produces anger, hostility, and divisiveness; and (4) the lack of leadership on the part of institutional leaders and lack of honesty by faculty members leads to difficulty in having meaningful discourse about political correctness. Finally, the university is thought to have become more politically adversarial in ways that are opposed to the kind of thinking and living together that it would like to represent. (GLR)

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FREEDOM AND IDEOLOGY: THE DEBATE ABOUT POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

This symposium was a Plenary Session at the American Council on Education's 74th Annual Meeting and was recorded in Washington D.C. on January 24, 1992. Participants, in alphabetical order were: Steve Balch, President, National Association of Scholars, Elizabeth K. Minnich, Professor, Graduate School of the Union Institute, Robert M. Rosenzweig, President, Association of American Universities, and Reginald Wilson, Senior Scholar, American Council on Education. The panel was moderated by David Mathews, President of the Kettering Foundation.

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Mathews: It seems to me that we are asked to do two rather different things. One is to replicate the debate over political correction, or whatever the term is that you would like to use; that is, the panelists are expected to take positions and defend those positions. I suspect they will do that to some extent. I would like to suggest that there is another purpose for this panel and that is to interpret or try to understand the debate rather than simply to replicate it. What does the debate tell us about what's happening in higher education in the United States? What does it tell us about the relationship of higher education to what is happening in this country and to the world and to the students who attend? More specifically, the question might be: What can we learn from this? For those of you who have administrative positions, maybe the question is: How should we respond to this debate? That really seems to be the kind of question that people with administrative responsibilities would ask. Perhaps the panel can also tell us what they think students are learning from this debate, intentionally or not.

Later this spring the Kettering Foundation will issue a report based on a study that has just been completed in which we have interviewed your students across the United States for several periods of time, not using simply the interview techniques but those kinds of focus group techniques where people talk through the issue. The question that is behind that study is how do students see politics? How do they feel about politics? What are their attitudes toward it? The study has been done. The findings have not been issued and I don't want to overly anticipate what the author will say. But if you look at what students are saying in those discussions, you get a very strong sense of what their attitudes are. First of all, they are cynical in the extreme. What do I mean by cynical? They believe that politics is a never-ending conflict, corrupt, mean-spirited, and ultimately ineffectual. That is, it never solves any problems that people really care about. They believe that politics does not have anything to do with them and they do not want to have anything to do with politics. They would just as soon have the bubonic plague on their campus. Now if you press them a little bit and ask them what they might do politically, they have a very thin view of citizenship. That is, frankly they see little role for themselves in the political system as citizens. They feel powerless, they don't think that there is much that they or any other individual can do up against this system. As a matter of fact, they have a very individualistic view of politics. If you ask them: What would you do? the things they describe are things that individuals would do. I might write a letter. I might vote. When they talk about what happens in politics, they talk almost exclusively of individual rights. They seldom if ever mention responsibilities. Nowhere in the interviews as I've seen them did students talk about politics as having anything to do with joining with other people to solve common problems. If there is one bright spot in the interview data it is that

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students do care very much. They are not indifferent to the things that they're talking about. They are able to talk about what they would like to see in politics. For example, they would say in interviews they would like to see the kind of political debates going on where the object was not so much to win but to try and understand the perspective of other people. They could even identify certain political skills they wish they had but do not have, but would like to acquire. Maybe this is good news and maybe this is bad news. They do not blame the institutions of higher education for their attitudes nor do they look to them for the skills that they would like to have. They see institutions of higher education as irrelevant to political life.

Minnich: The first thing to say is that I think the questions are well posed. We're dealing with questions like the relationship between education and politics, the curriculum and politics, knowledge and power constructs. There's a pedagogy inherent in such questions. My own relationship to them has two sides which I'll just point out for now. I'm in philosophy and I'm in women's studies. I've spent over 20 years with curricular issues in colleges all over the country and to some extent abroad talking about feminist scholarship, African-American scholarship, and multicultural scholarship, with people who agree and disagree, thousands of people, mostly on campuses, to try to understand what this scholarship might teach us about what we inherited and how it might inspire future directions. How should we think about all this? My own answer has been to develop over the years what is usually called a feminist critique of the dominant meaning system. That is, an effort to find out what it is in the dominant meaning system that makes it not immediately clear when somebody says: "You haven't studied the majority of humankind, surely you meant to." Why that wasn't immediately engaging to people seemed to me a serious question and I've been working on trying to understand what in the thinking and language of all of us made that question hard to hear and to move with. So I've been working on critique. That's one side of it. The other side of the continuum is that I would now very much like to further those conversations in a more creative way. We're in a new world, a few doors are open, some walls have come down. We now need to find out whether the walls are still in us as well as outside. I would like to get into the fascinating issue of how we can think better in this world that we have today and I find that effort in many cases blocked by an oppositional, mud-wrestling, media-hyped debate that polarizes, just as in another sense things were polarized 20 years ago when we were all getting attacked in highly personal ways. I would like to break out of that mode which is serving no one very well and get on with the really fascinating challenges posed by a conference such as this: How do we think in such a world?

Balch: The debate about political correctness, while it proceeds in some ways in a political fashion, is actually a debate not about politics but about appropriate intellectual standards and appropriate academic ethics. I think the major issue for the modern American university in this debate is whether it can sustain the high approval and legitimacy that is has long enjoyed as the institution in which new knowledge is discovered and through which knowledge is transmitted. That's what is at stake for the university and that is what the criticism is basically about. When you talk to a lot of students and find that they don't know a great deal about politics as conventionally understood I think you're seeing a sign of a deeper problem, which in fact is even deeper than the controversies over politicization, and that is the university's failure to attend in a responsible way to undergraduate education, to formulate some sense of priority about what students should learn, to introduce students in an orderly way to major areas of knowledge, to concentrate their intellectual focus on interesting issues and broad perspectives and thereby teach them how to think and give them a frame of reference in which to understand a great many things including political life. What is at issue here is to convey a sufficient knowledge base because without knowledge we can't think. We think by reordering the knowledge that we have in our minds. I think the failure of the university to attend to this responsibility is the major problem that higher education faces and it is related to the problem of politicization in the following way: If an institution loses sight of its major and legitimate mission, if at the heart of that institution an intellectual and to some degree a moral vacuum emerges, then all sorts of other purposes which may be extraneous and in some cases contradictory to the mission of that institution are apt to flood in. The extent to which American higher education has become politicized is really a reflection of the great vacuum, that great gaping hole at the heart of our higher education system which has been developing for some time now and which invites various purposes.

"From evidence I have seen, students believe that politics is a never-ending conflict, corrupt, mean-spirited, and ultimately ineffectual. That is, it never solves any problems people really care about. They see institutions of higher learning as irrelevant to political life."
— David Mathews

Rosenzweig: This is a difficult issue to get your arms around for the obvious reason that it's not a single issue but a variety of issues and they have many layers, many points of entry, and can be viewed from many angles of vision. So it's frequently difficult in discussions or debates on this subject to get the participants to confront one another because they're not talking about the same subject, they're talking about different subjects. My approach – I want to be explicit about it at the outset because of my work for the last decade with university administrators – is to deal with the subject from the point of view of university leadership and its responsibilities. In a sense I've taken an easy angle on this issue because it strikes me that there can be little argument that the responsibility of academic leadership, and it grows out of the essential nature of the university, is to keep the institution open to the fullest and freest expression of differing views even when, one might even say especially when, the expression of those views produces anger, hostility and divisiveness. I take that to be more than a piety. I take it to be a view that has serious and important consequences. It means to me, for example, that speech codes, rules that prohibit the expression of certain views, are an anathema in the university setting. That's one example of the way in which institutional leaders have a responsibility for holding the institution open to the expression of the fullest range of views on any issue that happens to arise.

"I think the major issue for the modern American university in this debate is whether it can sustain the high approval and legitimacy that it has long enjoyed as an institution in which new knowledge is discovered and through which knowledge is transmitted." – Steve Balch

Wilson: I agree with Bob Rosenzweig that there are a variety of issues that are involved here. But I think, and here I show my own biases, that there is a fundamental underlying problem that makes it difficult to have meaningful discourse about this issue of alleged political correctness. And that is the lack of leadership on the part of institutional leaders and the lack of honesty on the part of faculty members. And I say that very directly because I think they know better. As I travel around the country and visit campuses and speak with students, what is most conspicuous about them is their ignorance about their own history. I lay that directly at the feet of their faculty members, because I hear them describe, and I've heard pieces of it this afternoon, the American academic institution as a place where there is a disinterested search for truth, the tower of light and universality, the place in which we are all seeking after scientific and unbiased knowledge. That may be an ideal to which the academy has been aspiring since its beginning in 1636 in America. It has never achieved it because of some very real other aspects that are always left out. And as I listen to the discussion I'm waiting to hear words like racism, sexism, exclusion of people irrespective of merit, and I don't hear any of those words in describing the academy that I know and whose history I'm familiar with. If faculty members are unwilling to tell the truth about the academy, then we begin our discussion of the issues from false premises. On the one hand we have some people talking about sitting on a hill which I don't know anything about, and on the other we talk about the real dirt and mud of institutions made up of human beings who are very much like their counterparts in the larger society – racist, sexist, exclusionary, and being dragged kicking and screaming into the 20th century by the Civic Rights Bill, Affirmative Action, and so forth. Just like everybody else. If that indeed is the real institution and we can talk about all sides of it, the aspiration toward truth, the aspiration toward scientific knowledge as well as the history of exclusion, then perhaps we can begin to talk about where we go from here, rather than viewing those persons who are called politically correct as enemies of these pristine values that are by no means the only ones in the academy. Without that kind of historical accuracy and the premise of an institution that is multi-dimensional, that has all these aspects – the shining ideals as well as the dirty hands – then we're really not talking about the same institution and we'll always be talking past each other. And I think if we as academics and as scholars ought to begin somewhere, maybe we can begin with that truth.

Mathews: I'd like to ask now, with no particular order in mind, if anybody on the panel thinks that further comment is needed to draw this matter more sharply in focus for the audience that's to consider it. What in our individual presentations have we left out? What yet needs to be said?

Balch: I have some disagreement with Professor Wilson. I think that the notion of the university as a place where ideas are evaluated, where knowledge is discovered, where knowledge is transmitted, is ultimately the reason for its existence. And if the university comes to be seen as pursuing other purposes, even if those purposes are enlightened and valuable ones, the university will have, in a serious and I think dangerous way, blurred its particular function and blurred the various privileges and immunities which it as an intellectual institution has receiv-

ed. There are a lot of political things that we would like to do and there are many institutions through which they can be done. But if they're done first and foremost through the university, universities end up looking like political parties or like social agencies or even departments of social welfare and human services. Then in point in fact the university will have lost its identity. Now secondly, I find it ironic and kind of palpably self-contradictory to hear arguments about how deeply our society and the university itself are imbued in racism and then as the antidote for that hear proposed a variety of programs that would accord special privileges and special treatment to those presumably discriminated against. If indeed the racism is there and is as severe as it's being alleged, then this is an argument whose end forgets its beginning. The best way to get fair treatment, the best way to get equitable treatment, the best way to get a system in which individuals, whatever their background, are not only equal in terms of their chances but as nearly as can be equal in terms of what they achieve, is to treat them equally. If you have equal treatment then I think you will surely get the diversity that we would all like to see. Diversity is a natural outcome of equal treatment, but if diversity itself becomes a goal, if what you want to do is set up a system whereby individuals are not evaluated but rather groups are, then the result is not diversity of a healthy kind but merely an instituion based on patronage. Alas, I think that's the direction in which we're heading and I think if we don't change our direction, then the various advantages and immunities and privileges and all the things that make intellectual institutions work as they should will be forfeited and we will be in lots and lots of trouble.

Mathews: Elizabeth, perhaps you have a thought on this point.

Minnich: A number, a number. If we analyze these last statements we find they make heavy use of disjunctive language; and that's one of the reasons we fall into oppositional rhetoric. Also, I believe, if we were honest, we would find that we have differing interests and commitments and cares, intellectual and also personal. But look for a minute at the positions that have been laid out. One gives us a notion of reason which is fundamentally ahistorical. One gives us a notion of reason, as Reggie set it out, that is in conversation with the historical where meanings are mediated by what happens. Insofar as we hold that reason is ahistorical we are arguing that there are minds capable of knowing things according to this reason which are themselves ahistorical. There may be ahistorical reasons but people may not be ahistorical. We're taking epistemological positions here. Which position we take, you've just heard, you hear on your campuses, has immediate and powerful political implications. Either I believe that reason is mediated through historical cultural forms or I believe it is above history perfect and pure and eternal. What I believe determines how I'm going to deal with issues. This is not neutral, it's going to have consequences, it has had consequences. The university which is dedicated to the life of the mind and to reason has always been political, political in the sense of creating forms of life within which we can live and work together with all of our differences and commonalities. Epistemologies are profoundly political because they define our fundamental approach to issues.

Mathews: Could you elaborate further?

Minnich: One of the things that strikes me, from the way I think about things, is that we've left the political understood in an adversarial sense and gone right to legalism and that puts us on a plane of thinking that I find, and I think probably many of us do, really dangerous to the kind of thinking and living together and working together we would like to engage in. It ends up back to the notion of reason that is disinterested, pure and eternal. You end up with things being strictly comparable which historically are not strictly comparable. Let me give you a concrete example. I recently heard somebody say it is exactly the same thing when a student shows up on campus with a T-shirt that says "Hitler was right," and another students shows up with a T-shirt that says "It's a black thing, you wouldn't understand." These are absolutely not comparable. The difference is a voice from the people who slaughtered six million plus human beings and a voice from people who are claiming a culture with some pride. Let me give you one other example. Those of us who work in feminist scholarship have been called neo-Nazis. The use of the epithet neo-Nazi shocks me down to my core and makes we ask where is history? Where is history? This irresponsible use of language makes us back off from engaging our thought and practices of living together with the complexities of history and culture and end up in nothing but oppositional, abstract modes of thought where only lawyers can help us.

"There can be little argument that the responsibility of academic leadership is to keep the university open to the fullest and freest expression of differing views even when, one might even say especially when, the expression of those views produces anger, hostility and divisiveness." — Robert Rosenzweig

Rosenzweig: Elizabeth suggests a very interesting and I think potentially complex calculus of ways in which we must evaluate different forms of expression in order to decide which ones are acceptable and which ones are not. Reggie has very usefully and certainly correctly reminded us that racism and sexism are significant aspects still of American life and certainly still of instituional life in academia. And that efforts to expose, understand and eradicate those evils are important, indeed essential parts of the agenda that we face in colleges and universities. My problem is that when those words are used in any discourse of the kind we're having now, they are not in my experience typically used to illuminate the debate; they're used to close the debate by bludgeoning the opposition into submission, by silencing it with a label that's so horrible that the very effort to overcome the label changes the nature of the debate in which one has to engage. But it is fundamentally in that respect no different from any of the other epithets that Elizabeth was describing in that its purpose in this context is to silence somebody whose views are different from yours or whose behavior is different from yours, as it was when the epithet of choice was Communist, as it was when the epithet of choice was a baby-burning warmonger, as it was when no doubt it was an anti-Christ and any number of others that have historically had resonance in academic life and in social life at large. For those of us in education it's not enough to say that we aspire to debate on a higher and more illuminating level than that. It ought to be the reality.

"There is a fundamental underlying problem that makes it difficult to have meaningful discourse about this issue of alleged political correctness. And that is the lack of leadership on the part of institutional leaders and the lack of honesty on the part of faculty members."
— Reginald Wilson

Wilson: The intent of describing something accurately is not to stop debate but to engage in it. Let me just be flat out about that. If we describe the history of American society by saying that it is simply a matter of inadvertence that although women are the majority of the population they only happen to be 27 percent of the faculty and the fact that African-Americans are 12.1 percent of the American population, they only happen to be four percent of the faculty. That just happened. How do we engage in a discussion when we tell those lies? We can't have a meaningful discussion with those untruths. We must begin by saying African-Americans were systematically excluded from the predominantly white institutions of this country. That's a matter of fact. That's just calling something by its name. It's not intended to silence. It's intended to start the debate from the truth. I said that in my opening comments. Why don't we start with the truth? The truth is that our institutions have been racist. The truth is that our institutions have been sexist. Then as we begin to talk about the points that Steve Balch raises we begin from a perception of a common understanding of the flaws of our institution and they are terribly flawed. We know that, historically. We know that if we are to correct those, we must first acknowledge that they exist. Affirmative action means that we must correct a wrong that has been committed against that identifiable group of people, and it does not mean as Steve Balch would have it, that we just stop doing what we've been doing. I find that a rather passive corrective to history. If we spend 300 years beating up on someone and then we say we're going to stop doing that, now we'll treat everybody the same, what do we do about that bloody body laying there with all those knots on it. And the answer that I hear at least by implication is that we do nothing. We just stop what we're doing and begin to treat everyone alike. What our history has been, at least since World War II, is a conscious effort of recompense for harm done to groups of people — groups of women, groups of minorities — and we have developed some means, imperfect, flawed, very inefficient, to try and correct them.

Mathews: Why don't we let the audience have at us for awhile and then we'll come back to the panel.

Audience: What you said about the history of American education is absolutely true. Blacks and women were excluded and blacks more so than women. Do you think now first that there is exclusion still and, if you do, do you think it is as great as it was in the past?

Wilson: Is the exclusion as bad as it used to be? Certainly not, but the exclusion is still very evident, it is still very systemic, and it still must require systemic means to overcome it.

Audience: Say more about how we can learn to think together to deal with the realities that we face on a daily basis.

Minnich: How to do that very briefly is of course difficult. Let me go to a point I made earlier when I said that I am trying to understand why we could not think well together about these issues. And the metaphor I used was that some walls have come down but we may find we still have them within us. There are modes of thought that have been developed over many, many ages in which

some conceptual errors have been deeply embedded such that we all trip on them in different ways. We all know perfectly well that nobody has denied that there was sexism, that there was racism. Nobody has denied that historically speaking huge groups of people categorized by kind were excluded from higher education. That's a fact. And the people who did that excluding was a whole culture, a whole society. A lot of people variously involved obviously believed this was the right thing to do. The hard part is to get at these assumptions that were part of culture for a very long time. These assumptions were held in good faith by the major thinkers in the tradition who perpetuated it. So the effort must now be to get on to more creative thinking, to overcome the blocks that come from a tradition we no longer really believe in. The tools to do that are also from that tradition. That's an important admission. People always assume we don't think that. The principle that all men are created equal didn't mean all of us at all. Most of us were excluded. But the principle is usable or we wouldn't be here now, right?

Audience: Dr. Balch says that the university is essentially about truth and knowledge. I agree. It is supposed to be a place of discovery, disclosure and debate. And those of us who first engaged the traditional university in the 60s and the early 70s made one set of arguments about equity of access and another with respect to exclusion from the curriculum. We said that indeed the university is a place wherein knowledge should be pursued and that there has been a systematic exclusion of information by and about the same people who have been excluded physically from the university. I would like for you to address, Dr. Balch, the question of an inclusionary curriculum. What is your objection to the attempt to in fact make the university more responsive to new information, new interpretations, and other cultures, as opposed to automatically assuming that this somehow violates the very mission of the university that you've talked about?

Balch: I don't object. My own work has been in large measure and effort to acquaint myself with other cultures and their history. I think it's a valuable thing to do. I think the problem with the curriculum these days is that it has too little substance of any kind and if one of the things you want to do is to add substance by giving students a serious introduction to the cultures and civilizations of the world, if we mean by inclusion things that are important to know, then inclusion is to be welcomed. On the other hand, if inclusion means an effort to represent various groups because we feel they should be represented apart from the importance of whatever it is we will study in looking at those groups, then I think inclusion misunderstands what it is that the university is all about.

Audience: How important is Western culture?

Balch: In the last 400 to 500 years at least most of the important ideas developed in what is called the West. Of course if you take Western history far enough back you discover that it has its origins in many non-Western cultures. But if what you want to do is study science, or technology, or the most important economic institutions we have today, if what you want to do is understand the major political philosophies in the world, all of them are Western in origin. If the objective is to introduce students to that which is most important, and if one wants to empower students culturally, individually and in any other way, that's indeed what you have to do. The test has to be significance. The test can't be representing everybody, the test can't be some sort of numerical equality or proportionality, the test has to be whether the material is really significant. Now what is significant is debatable. My views aren't necessarily right, but I think the principle that the test has to be the importance of the phenomenon to be studied should be the intellectual compass in this debate. Otherwise we'll be entirely lost.

"The university has always been political in the sense of creating forms of life within which we can live and work together. What I notice about today's situation is that we have left politics understood in an adversarial sense and gone right to legalism and that puts us on a plane that I find really dangerous to the kind of thinking and living together and working together we would like to engage in." — Elizabeth Minnich

Audience: One problem is that the debate is carried on in the media and foundations and so not subject to academic ground rules.

Rosenzweig: I would agree that we have been on the whole not well served by the media generally in the reporting of this whole controversy.

Audience: I mean more specifically the political agenda of certain foundations; it's not just the newspapers, it's a whole publishing industry on the side that's directed at higher education but is seeking its leverage outside of higher education.

Rosenzweig: Leave aside if we can the question of think tanks and foundations. I think that is a separate point. My sense of the media and why *Forbes* reports the way it reports and the *Washington Post* reports the way it reports is that they define news as conflict and what they're interested in is conflict, and frequently at the most super-

ficial level. I think for example that the debate over the curriculum at Stanford was very badly reported. In a sense the university was in part responsible for that because they put out so much information that they made it impossible to comprehend it all. What was lost in the process was the fact that Stanford had a half a dozen years before this debate broke out, the faculty of the university had undertaken an effort to reintroduce some structure and coherence into the undergraduate curriculum. So Steve Balch's observation is quite correct. The main problem with the undergraduate curriculum in most colleges and universities isn't that it's excessively Western or that it's insufficiently non-Western, it is that it doesn't exist and needs to be created. Now in that process everything ought to be open for debate, as I think it was at Stanford. To expect that to be reported sensitively and fairly and fully in the popular media, I think, is to expect something that is not ever likely to happen. There are reasons why the Heritage Foundation or other think tanks which operate in this area become more or less prominent over time. Clearly there's a lot of conservative political money around that began to make its way into the academy and into what we might call the fringe academy in the late 1970s and through the 1980s and there's nothing inappropriate about that. The conservative side of the debate was underrepresented, I think, before then. You can argue that it's overrepresented now. That depends on what your point of view is, I suppose. But I can assure you that given the way this culture works, the way this society works, it will be regressed, it is in the process of being regressed, and that's what free and open debate is all about and that's why you'd never want to close it off.

Wilson: Elizabeth is right to say we must challenge some of the fundamental assumptions that are built into much of what we study and then are transmitted by allegedly educated professors who pass on their ignorance to their students. That is what needs to be challenged and that is often what is most resistant. In my discipline, psychology, for example, although we may believe that we live in an enlightened age, most of my colleagues believe indeed that there are substantial genetic components to the lower IQ scores that are on average earned by African-Americans and by Hispanics compared to whites and Asians. And that has been substantiated by surveys of them and of the leading experts in the field. So that is a belief that is held fundamentally and certain practices ensue from that. If that is held to be true then it is not accidental nor is it surprising that 55 percent of the children in classes for the mentally retarded are African-American and Hispanic. That's not accidental. It flows from a belief system. And that's what needs to be challenged in the academy and not just say we need to know something about Asia or about the happy little Hispanics and so forth; we need to know why we believe what we believe and how the development of knowledge occurs in the academy, how it gets sanctioned. But where are the level playing fields where these various points of view can content with each other and establish some sense of truth? We may think that this kind of debate goes on in some kind of regular way in the academy but there is no field on which all our voices can contend equally and therefore debate doesn't go on regularly and systematically in the academy. As a consequence we perpetuate this ignorance that has malicious impacts for people of color.

Audience: What is the role of the public in this debate?

Rosenzweig: Obviously no institution likes to be criticized from the outside. Every institution wants to be in charge of its own affairs. Optimally perhaps that's the way it should be if institutions are working well. But in general that's not how we keep institutions on the straight and narrow. No one would argue, for example, that the military and the decisions it makes should be left to the exclusive preserve of generals. We feel that this is fair game for public controversy. No one feels that the way in which health care is delivered should be left up to doctors and the other corporate representatives of the health community. Think about the controversy going on now about breast implants, how it is challenged, and debated in the public press. There is no area in our lives in which we would feel confident if there was total immunity from public criticism. When an institution functions well it earns a certain level of confidence from the larger public and the larger public lets it do its business in its own way. As academics we like it that way for obvious reasons. The phenomenon of political correctness is I think a prime symptom that a certain threshold point of confidence has been lost. It's a loss of public confidence that we're dealing with here and when that happens public debate is inevitable and in fact probably is the only means by which some restoration can be effected.

Mathews: Well, let us thank the panel and thank you very much for attending. □